

1997 HERD UNIT CLASSIFICATION OF ROOSEVELT ELK IN REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS

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INTRODUCTION

Annual classifications of Roosevelt elk in RNSP are important to document relative abundance and population dynamics characteristics. Wallen (1997) identified elk data needs, management questions and recommendations for long term monitoring.

METHODS

During 1997, classification counts were conducted opportunistically by Fish and Wildlife Branch staff. In addition, the population ecology class at Humboldt State University assisted this year by conducting four systematic classification counts along four separate transects on the 15th and 16th of November.

Route #1

Travel north from Orick and begin looking for elk at the Arcata Redwood headquarters. The ARCO office is on the right (east) side of highway 101 about ¼ mile north of Rolf's Restaurant. Continue north along the Highway 101 bypass (divided highway) to the top of the hill. Then return to the south end of Newton B. Drury Memorial Parkway and travel north through Elk Prairie. Continue to the Ossagon trailhead. Park here and hike to the ocean.

Route #2

Travel north from Orick to the Rolf's restaurant. Turn left on to Davison Road, continue to the Gold Bluff's beach road, and park at the Fern Canyon trailhead. Hike the coastal trail north to Ossagon Creek.

Route #3 (three locations)

- 1) Turn off of highway 101 just south of Orick on to Hilton Road (east side of highway). Drive past the blue house on the right and make the first left turn. The road follows along the edge of the forest and the dairy pasture. At the end of the road is the South Operations Center.
- 2) Return to highway 101 and travel north past Orick to the Bald Hills road. Turn right and continue past the A mill a short ways to another turnoff to the right leading to the Redwood Creek trailhead. Park at the trailhead and hike to the first crossing of Redwood Creek (about 1.5 miles).
- 3) Finish the count with a classification of animals at the little red schoolhouse adjacent to Stone Lagoon.

Route #4

Travel north of Orick on highway 101 to the Bald Hills turnoff. Turn right and travel to the park boundary.

RESULTS

Table 1. Compilations of all survey data for route # 1.

Route	Location	Sample Period	Bull	Spike	Cow	Calf	Total	Rating
1	Bypass	Sat- a.m.	0	1	21	4	25	1
	Ossagon Trail	Sat -a.m.	0	0	1	1	2	1
	Bypass	Sat -p.m.	2	2	20	7	31	1
	Ossagon Trail	Sat -p.m.	0	0	2	0	2	1
	Near mouth Lost Man Ck	Sun - a.m.	2	0	0	0	2	1
	Bypass	Sun - a.m.	0	2	17	7	26	1
	Ossagon Trail	Sun - a.m.					0	
	Bypass	Sun - p.m.	2	2	21	6	29	1
	Ossagon Trail	Sun - p.m.					0	
	RNSP Surveys	Date						
	Bypass	13-Nov-97	2	2	15	5	24	1
	Ossagon Prairie	Jul-97	0	1	18	5	24	?
	Elk Prairie	12-Oct-97	1	3	21	7	32	1

Table 2. Compilations of all survey data for route #2.

Route	Location	Sample Period	Bull	Spike	Cow	Calf	Total	Rating
2	Davison Ranch area	Sat - a.m.	18	5	32	10	65	2
	Gold Bluffs Beach	Sat - a.m.	10	0	20	7	37	2
	Davison Ranch area	Sat -p.m.	18	5	32	9	64	1
	Gold Bluffs Beach	Sat -p.m.	2	0	14	14	30	1
	Far North End of route	Sat -p.m.	0	0	1	1	2	2
	Davison Ranch area	Sun - a.m.	8	5	33	8	53	2
	Gold Bluffs Beach	Sun - a.m.	10	0	21	4	35	3
	Davison Ranch area	Sun - a.m.	7	3	31	10	51	1
	Gold Bluffs Beach	Sun - p.m.	10	2	16	8	36	1
	RNSP Surveys	Date						
	Davison Ranch area	24-Jun-97	3	4	27	5	39	2
	Davison Ranch area	20-Oct-97	16	1	33	7	57	2
	Davison Ranch area	1-Nov-97	2	4	34	8	48	1
	Gold Bluffs Beach	10-Nov-97	8	0	21	2	31	2
	Gold Bluffs Beach	18-Nov-97	0	0	10	5	15	1

Table 3. Compilations of all survey data for route # 3.

Route	Location	Sample Period	Bull	Spike	Cow	Calf	Total	Rating
3	South Ops.	Sat- a.m.	6	1	11	7	25	3
	Lower Redwood Ck	Sat- a.m.	6	0	0	0	6	1
	Redwood. Ck. Trail	Sat- a.m.	1	2	17	5	25	3
	South Ops.	Sat -p.m.	7	1	14	6	28	1
	Redwood Ck. Trail	Sat -p.m.	1	3	27	2	33	2
	Stone Lagoon (Red School)	Sat - p.m.	3	6	57	10	76	
	South Ops.	Sun - a.m.	1	1	14	4	20	1
	Lower Redwood Ck	Sun - a.m.	10	0	0	0	10	1
	Redwood Ck. Trail	Sun - a.m.	0	0	2	0	2	1
	Stone Lagoon (Red School)	Sun - a.m.	3	6	55	6	70	2
	South Ops.	Sun - p.m.	1	?	17	?	?	4
	South Ops.	Sun - p.m.	6	0	0	0	6	1
	RNSP Surveys	Date						
	South Ops.	5-Sep-97	9	1	14	4	28	1
	South Ops.	12-Oct-97	9	0	16	3	28	1
	Lower Redwood Ck	27-Jun-97	2	2	16	0	20	2
	Lower Redwood Ck	29-Oct-97	10	0	0	0	10	1

Table 4. Compilations of all survey data for route # 4.

Route	Location	Sample Period	Bull	Spike	Cow	Calf	Total	Rating	Unclassified
4	Bald Hills	Sat- a.m.					0		
	Copper Ck.	Sat- p.m.	11	0	0	0	11	2	
	Coyote Ck.	Sat -p.m.	2	8	44	17	71	3	7 additional
	Copper Ck.	Sun- a.m.	10	0	0	0	10	2	
	Coyote Ck.	Sun - a.m.	3	7	45	10	65	2	
	Bald Hills	Sun- p.m.					0	fog	
	RNSP Surveys	Date							
	Bald Hills	29-Oct-97					0		
	Williams Ridge	3-Nov-97	6	2	?	?	8	4	35 additional

Table 5. Summary of number of elk observed by route and sample period.

Time period		Route #1	Route#2	Route#3	Route#4		Total #
Saturday a.m.		27	102	56	0		185
Saturday p.m.		33	94	137	89		353
Sunday a.m.		28	89	102	75		294
Sunday p.m.		29	36	24	0		89

Table 6. Summary of Elk classification counts conducted in the fall of 1997 in RNSP.

Location	Number of survey route repetitions	Highest total count	Bull:100 Cows	Spike:100 Cows	Calves:100 Cows
Stone Lagoon	3	80	5	10	12
Lower Redwood Creek	4	33	48	11.3	11.3
Bypass	5	31	6.3	2.1	30.8
Elk Prairie	1	32	4.7	14.3	33.3
SOC	5	28	46	5.8	34.7
Gold Bluffs	8	37	32	2.4	37.9
Davison	6	65	35	8	27
Bald Hills	3	101	22	15	20

LITERATURE CITED

Wallen, R. L. 1997. Monitoring abundance and distribution of Roosevelt elk in 1996 in Redwood National and State Parks. Annual project report. Fish and Wildlife Branch, RNSP files, Orick, Ca. 6pp.